



# The GREGORIAN REVIEW



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# The GREGORIAN REVIEW

Studies in Sacred Chant and Liturgy

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English-language edition of the *Revue Gregorienne*

Bulletin of the School of Solesmes

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Bishop of Toledo

November 25, 1955

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## BY WAY OF EDITORIAL

This issue marks the close of the second year of publication of the English-language edition of the *Revue Gregorienne*, which in its original French has expressed the true voice of Solesmes for forty-five years. In a certain sense this venture has been a bold experiment, for the general content of the *Gregorian Review* is admittedly unique in scope and emphasis. Perhaps it is too early to say that we have made the experiment successful, but let us state, at least, that we have been heard in our efforts and that an embryonic response has been sparked by our new publication.

I have a letter on my desk at the moment which, in the course of making a routine request for information, bestows praise of the highest kind upon the *Review* and its concepts. It is not a unique letter, but it is a particularly striking one, since it places the laurel on precisely that feature of the *Review* which might have been detrimental to its acceptance, the profundity of the studies it contains. Of course, there have been other letters. Suffice it to say, the old maxim about pleasing all of the people all of the time holds good with emphasis where liturgical music is concerned. Those who have read Father Blanc's book, the last installment of which appears in this issue, know that even Solesmes has not had a path of roses in its progress toward an authentic version of the great tradition of Latin liturgical chant, nor do the adherents of the Solesmes school find their task any easier in our own time, even though supporters are more numerous and exemplification more widespread. We have, therefore, not looked for overwhelming plaudits or enthusiasm. We are thankful in this most appropriate season that the proportion of criticism to appreciation has been so favorable.

It is difficult to plan ahead for the entire year which faces us, but certain features of future issues have been

determined and may be described here. We expect to complete the publication of Dom Froger's book *The Chants of the Mass in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries*, the fourth installment of which appears in this number. We also plan to continue our policy of printing studies of the principal chants of the repertoire for feasts which are current with each issue, these to include studies on chironomy, modality, performance and esthetics. Articles of current interest and practical nature will appear, as well as material on the liturgy and on matters related to sacred chant and music of the Church.

It would be superfluous to say that the *Gregorian Review* has a select and elite body of subscribers. This would be apparent from the very nature of the articles which are contained in it. Persons who place their interest in articles on modality, spirituality and interpretation of the chant are persons of serious bent. Yet, if a publication is to grow and prove itself worthy of continuance, it must command a substantial group of readers, enough to provide the modest income vital to survival. This is a serious matter in the case of the *Gregorian Review*, for it will be necessary to increase the number of persons who support it actively during the next few months in order to demonstrate that it is worthy of the sacrifice and concentrated effort that has been placed behind it in the past two years. Periodicals such as the *Gregorian Review* are never great popular successes. They are not brought into being with the criterion of circulation as the motivation. The enormous picture weeklies which underscore the peculiar visual-literacy of our times thrive on vulgarization . . . sometimes in the better sense, sometimes not. The *Review*, if it is to survive at all, must live for the value of its outlook and the perspective of its content. This means that the furtherance of the Solesmes point of view by the printed page will depend directly on the desire of English-speaking readers to maintain it.

We must point out the harsh fact that publication for the past two years would not have been possible at all, were it not for the willingness of the publisher to stake the future of the *Review* on a response proportional to the serious objectives of the magazine. In such affairs the cost is never



offset by the return, and the continuance of the venture is due to the faith the publisher has in the worth of the project, aside from any material aspects. Continuance will be on the same basis, of course, for growth in any publication of serious intent is slow.

In addition to the publisher's point of view, we must consider that of the editor and the advisory editors. It is difficult to weigh the readiness of persons for scholarly publications when it is necessary to break fresh ground by the very fact of the publication. We have believed that English-speaking readers were ready for the publication which was launched in Europe forty-five years ago. The response has not been disappointing, but only the future can tell us whether we have planted a seed which will grow. It is in the hands of the readers and readers-to-be to give us the answer.

The staff of the *Review* extends to all readers everywhere best wishes for a joyful Christmas season and a fruitful and happy new year.

# \*THE MUSICAL TEACHING OF SOLESMES AND CHRISTIAN PRAYER

by Maurice Blanc

DOM JOSEPH GAJARD

## The "Commentaries of the Choirmaster"

With Dom Joseph Gajard, professed at Solesmes in 1911 and immediately assigned by the Reverend Abbot, Dom Delatte, to those attached to the scriptorium, we arrive at the present generation of the sons of Dom Gueranger. When Dom Mocquereau welcomed this young collaborator, who soon became his favorite disciple, the heroic era of discoveries and disputes, the era, too, of the harvesting of documents gathered each year in the files of the famous scriptorium, was coming to its close. The confidence of St. Pius X was about to give over the preparation of the Vatican Edition entirely to Solesmes, and the tranquil proprietorship of the rhythmic signs would be confirmed as being the Abbey's as soon as it might be again disputed. Then came the war of 1914. Dom Gajard was then choirmaster at Quarr Abbey. From then on he was continually in charge of the schola and the monastic choir, in close contact with Dom Mocquereau, whose spirit and supreme reflections he absorbed. During the late years of the older master the actual direction of the *Paleographie Musicale* was to associate him with the daily labors in which Dom Mocquereau wished to prolong yet further an ardor and zeal which would not die with him. It fell to Dom Gajard alone to publish the choir books for the use of the Benedictine order: in 1934 the *Antiphonale monasticum*, in 1936 *In Nocte Nativitatis Domini Nostri Jesu Christi*, in 1914 *In agendis mortuorum*. In all these we are made to admire the wonderful return to the primitive tradition in notation, the choice of

\*This is the final article of a series reproducing Father Blanc's book in its entirety.



versions, modality, factors which were already made apparent in *Officium Majoris Hebdomadae et Octavae Paschae* of the Vatican edition (for the entire Church), which was published in 1922.

It was principally in the composition of the second volume of Dom Mocquereau's *Nombre Musical Gregorien*, published in 1927, that Dom Gajard manifested his personality perhaps somewhat more, as is shown by the thanks rendered him by the master at the beginning of his work, not only for the enormous task of arranging the typography of the proofs and the revision of the citations of the various authors, but also for the "modifications, corrections, additions, all so significant, which he often prepared himself."

Nevertheless, although we hear the voice of Dom Mocquereau with Dom Gajard, to that extent we do not draw a very personal aspect from him, which seems to us to be singularly close to the original concept of Dom Gueranger.

The reciprocal action of the "two mirrors" of true devotion and chant, liturgy and music, prayer and art, contemplation and expression, has been realized by no one better than by the choirmaster who directed the schola of Solesmes in the jubilee year, 1950. No doubt, since Dom Pothier and Dom Mocquereau, there is nothing new to be written regarding the *Alleluia: Justus germinabit*, but that "the most opulent vocalizes are themselves only the blossoming, often quite wonderful, of the text". But taking up at this point the yet very general analysis of his predecessors, Dom Gajard follows it, delves to its core, and enriches it with a treasury of personal and previously unpublished "commentaries".

The commentary, such as given by Dom Gajard, is based essentially on musical art, however continually dense in summary and reflections of doctrinal or liturgical spirituality it may seem to be. These are reflections which include word and melody in a single glance, in which we may call its rhythmic lyricism. For it is from the critically established rhythmic tradition that Dom Gajard seeks to draw the secret of not *his own* interpretation, but of the restoration or resur-

rection of a piece such as it was sung in the Gregorian golden age. Where the *Paleographie Musicale* teaches us to distinguish a long or stressed neume from a light neume, the commentaries of Dom Gajard restore for us a lyric intention, simultaneously musicale and religious, of the composer inspired by grace.

This does not mean that the commentaries consider every neume, come what may. "To be *expressive*, it is not necessary that the melodies reflect the exact meaning of the text; they can be expressive just as well by merely interpreting the atmosphere which bathes the words, the sentiments which filled the soul of the composer at the very moment when he wrote them, and it is hardly possible that this should be of less interest." Dom Gajard wishes to give an example in the *Lauda Sion* which:

"has been criticized, because of its powerful inspiration and enthusiasm, of not being suitable to the text which is an abstract and rather dry exposition of the doctrine of the Eucharist. This, however, is forgetting the feeling of fervor and praise which governed its composition, as the overflowing character of its beginning attests: *Lauda Sion . . . Lauda ducem . . . quia major omni laude nec laudare sufficis . . . Laudis thema specialis hodie proponitur*. Understood from this point of view, the *Lauda Sion* has a very different aspect, and this is certainly its authentic meaning.<sup>1</sup>"

In the long run, however, it is best to depend on the most minute type of analysis, neume by neume, ictus by ictus, modal modulation by modal modulation, in order to discover the meaningful nuances which give life to the authentically liturgical interpretation of the sacred text. These nuances are often revealed or confirmed by a rhythmic notation. Here is only one example of a thousand. Commenting on the *Alleluia: Eripe me* of the Ninth Sunday after Pentecost, Dom Gajard says:

"Here, all the neumes are stressed. It is impossible to overlook the difference which exists between the pure Vatican edition and the completed Vatican edition, interpreted as the



Church has interpreted it throughout the ages. See how the soul crouches close to God, and how, at the word of God, it loses all its early fears. It feels itself so close to God that in singing *Deus meus*, it no longer gives a thought to the enemies which it has just spoken of, and lets itself drift into pure contemplation."

In this domain the commentaries of Dom Gajard already constitute a repertory of almost the entire liturgical year, to the point that their author from time to time takes exception that he should put too much of himself into it. Thus, in the instance of the Introit *Suscepimus* where the commentary has shown that the lengthening of the neumes in the entire second phrase of the piece follows the soul's turning to the admiration of the grandeurs of God after the simple, joyful, affectionate, filial thanks which the first part of the phrase expresses discreetly:

"One may say, perhaps, that this interpretation is somewhat subjective. We must, however, recognize that it is based on the text, the melodic line and the rhythmic indications of the manuscripts, and it seems to me that these supporting nuances, nuances of *cantando*, coinciding perfectly with the impulse of the melody and the meaning of the words, are not without significance . . . either accept this, or one is obliged to admit that the melody and even the words mean nothing; but then why sing at all?"

In point of fact, this caution presents us a perfect definition of the method of the commentator. He begins with the "signs" to which the author has had recourse:

"We know all these *signs*: the meaning of the text, the verbal or musical rhythm, simple or compound, the general modality and modulations of detail, inflections of the melodic line, intensive line, expressive nuances of the manuscripts, etc. I have done nothing more than draw them out, clarify one with another and synthesize their indications. I believe very sincerely that I have added nothing to what is given, for whoever knows how to detect it, in the architecture and details of the musical composition. It would have



been possible, certainly, to dig into this even further."

For Dom Gajard, just as for Dom Pothier and Dom Mocquereau, it is "the interior and contemplative character of Gregorian art which is its proper and essential virtue." Because of this, for him, there is a preference for the colorations which certain persons might call negative . . . discretion, measure, sobriety, reserve, simplicity, gentleness, restraint, etc. But why, if not because the composer wanted it thus, as heir of the perfect simplicity of hellenic art?

"Think of the majority of our sacred melodies: on paper they are contained in a few lines, and pass in a few minutes, three or four at the most are enough for their performance. Think particularly of our very smallest antiphons, almost completely syllabic, of a line or two at the most. From what do they derive their worth? By emphasis, grandiloquence, or seeking after effect? Not at all. They have value by the design, the 'line,' always simple, unornamented, extremely sober without falling into self-complacency . . . upon which the antique modality confers a splendid solidity . . . Would it not be a contradiction to put into the interpretation something the composer has so clearly excluded from his work?

"Now these little antiphons constitute, with the psalmody they are supposed to accompany, the very mainstay of the liturgical Office. A number of psalm-verses, an antiphon at the beginning and end, and you have all there is to psalmody, the entire basis of the Office. One might even say that the Office is mostly psalmody, for the large pieces, such as the Responsories of Matins, the Graduals, Alleluias and the like, are often only amplified and ornate psalmody. Obviously this is not the entire Gregorian repertory, but it is at least the substance of it, and we can look into it without fear of falling into error for something close to the intentions of the ancient composers."

From this declaration of musical order, which is the first consideration and which must remain first, Dom Ga-

jard proceeds to spirituality within the climate of supernatural psychology in which the liturgical devotion is steeped:

“Are these little antiphons inexpressive merely to be simpler? Of course not! They express wonderfully a state of the soul . . . or rather an attitude of the soul. The larger pieces develop one feeling or another. In basis, however, the same sentiment of reverence and adoration flows everywhere, a sentiment of the creature before his Creator . . . humility, absolute confidence, profound tenderness, of filial, joyous and total abandon . . . in a word, ‘faith’ in the full and ancient meaning of the word, that is to say, active and total confidence in God and each of his mysteries . . . support of the spirit, heart and will,—all of these are things, it would seem, which do not require specially to be exploited or declaimed, which call much more for an immense reserve and perfect discretion.

“If we were to characterize Gregorian chant in a single word, we would be obliged to say that it is entirely interior, and if I may be permitted to coin a phrase, ‘interiorizing,’ we may say that its proper virtue is to cause us to turn within ourselves, not for introspective analysis, but to find within ourselves Him who dwells there to speak, converse, live with Him in heart-to-heart proximity.”

Here we are clearly in the domain of pure contemplation, and, you will say, in that sense, in the domain of absolute calm where the tempest of human passion never stirs . . . not even a simple gust of air. — What an error! Did not Christ, with Whom Gregorian chant brings us into such close intimacy, have a human soul? Isn’t the Church, spouse of the Spirit, made up of souls who suffer, toil and hope in this valley of tears? We have only to open a *Liber Usualis* to find on every page the dramatic character inherent to human nature. Certain pieces are highly finished models, such as the responsories of Holy Week, “so expressive, among the most beautiful of the Gregorian repertoire . . . they have no need of commentary. It is enough to merely

sing them with all one's heart to be convinced by their accent, so profound and so true."

Fortunate that after this rebuttal the choirmaster of Solomes doesn't abandon us to ourselves before these extraordinary pieces! Let us listen to him, then, observing attentively how, for him, melody and text always behave like those two mirrors facing each which "multiply the same image to practically infinite depths." In the famous responsory *Tenebrae factae sunt*, the cry of the dying Christ on the cross after the seven last words has resounded throughout the choir. Here is the following responsory, *Animam meam*:

"Again a beautiful piece. This is still the plea of Christ, but this time the melody frankly follows the reality of the facts it expresses. I mean that, although springing from the mouth of the Lord, it conveys, most of the time, only the harsh treatment He is enduring, without expressing, except for a few instances, His . . . personal reaction, if I may so put it, to all this. And perhaps this gives an indication for the performance of these responsories. We might ask ourselves sometimes, in the responsory *Amicus meus* of Holy Thursday (to cite only one), if it might not be advisable to underscore in the singing the power and harshness of the order of Judas: *Ipse est, tenete eum; hoc malum . . .*, or perhaps, on the contrary, thinking that we have here a plaint of the Lord remembering the treason, that we ought to maintain for it the gentleness of the divine soul . . . This responsory *Animam meam*, in which doubt is impossible because the melody permits of only one interpretation, shows us that we need not fear to bring out the very object of the Lord's plaint, when the melody calls for it so clearly, . . . treason, harsh treatment, etc. In other words, we may let ourselves be led by the clear indication of the melody, and not by a more or less *a priori* principle . . ."

If we have understood this clearly, this is the point which astounds those who consider that Dom Gajard's "manner" draws upon only negative shadings and far-fetched



nuances. But let them follow with us the commentator himself:

“The first phrase, in the first mode, is of moving softness; however difficult it may be to translate the exact meaning of *dilectam*, it conveys to us all the tenderness in the soul of the Lord, and his sadness, too. We are kept in the low notes.

“Suddenly, at *et facta est*, no doubt the idea of the “roaring lion” to which the proud heritage of Christ may be compared, transforms the tone, which passes without transition from softness to harshness. Note not only the animation of the melody, but the clashes, the friction . . . and twice, in fact, of the very strongly stressed B natural (*pressus*) and the *fa*, also stressed, with, moreover, the pouncing on B by direct tritone, arriving immediately, I daresay violently, on the *mi* of *sicut*. The third mode final of *silva* changes nothing of this passionate tone. The *dedit contra me* . . . very lively, is also agitated and drives forward toward *dicens*, after which comes the clamor of the wicked, also hard and almost violent (*congregamini*). See the haste of *properate ad devorandum*.

“Then comes the word of the Lord which takes sway again, *posuerunt me*, still moved by what has just been recalled, if I may say so, and yet becoming progressively calmer (the fine interval of *in deserto solitudinis*), and becoming so very poignant at *luxit super me*. This syllabic and heavy fall of *me* on the *fa* has something so profoundly moving about it! And this time (*quia non est*), we remain in the low register, affirming with such sorrow, that in face of the malice of the persecutors no one may be found to give consolation or to answer with a little sympathetic love. Perhaps the final melodic rise, somewhat bizarre, of *faceret bene*, is explicable as a kind of welling up of discouragement and even of indignation . . .”

Similar interpretations are by no means rare in the directing of the choirmaster of Solesmes, as well as in his commentaries. Under his pen, *enthusiasm* is a word as often

used as *reserve*, or even *discretion*. Leaving the particularly decorative style of the responsories or the pieces of dramatic nature, let us look at the *Alleluias*. Here is that of the Eighth Sunday after Pentecost, the *Alleluia: Magnus Dominus*.

“Here everything is joyful and extraordinarily naïve, even the verse, which can nevertheless be construed, as words, to something serious and broad. This however, would not be right. I know of no other piece in the entire Gregorian repertoire which so calls to mind the popular songs of the middle ages. It seems to me that all these repetitions of the vocalises should be made “in echo” by a second choir.

“... We would be obliged, I think, to torture and distort this melody, even that of the verse, in trying to make something majestic of it. This is pure jubilation. See the word *Dominus* which rings out so clearly and strongly, then springing up like a rocket, and this little *valde* which arrives late, almost playfully . . . is this not quite fetching? The *et laudabilis* closes regularly on the tonic; one might even stop there . . . I always have the impression, though, that the composer, coming to this point, realized that he had not given out with all the praise which overflowed from his heart, and that, in compensation, he has added this little *valde*. It would be impossible to find anything more graceful and pretty.

“And here we are, far from the mystical angle, or from the long face and stiffness of pretended recollection! Do not the angels of Fra Angelico dance for God? And is it not the feeling of the immense beauty of this same God which has inspired this *Alleluia*?

“Would one dare say that this ‘exuberance’ is misplaced, and that it rings false in the Church? What nonsense! To say such a thing one would have to have failed to see this melody accurately. One thing differentiates it absolutely from all the joyous ritornellos of profane music, and even from the music we call religious. This is its

straightforward seventh-mode tonality, very strongly apparent, particularly in the final of the vocalise, which although graceful, naive, ravishingly beautiful, is nevertheless of perfect solidity. The relationships of the B naturals with the *fas* is far from our modern affectedness. Am I right in saying that it is perfectly chaste and pure, and that we are here faced with a suprahuman, suprasensitive jubilation, which comes from God and returns to Him?"

Yes, in the jubilation which Dom Gajard recommends to us, everything comes from God and returns to God. But this is without any constraint, and in particular, without any weakening of the musical material. Reserve must not impede the warmth of the voice, nor the warmth of the expression. Yet there is no piece, however colored and vibrant its execution may have been, which does not end like the pathetic antiphon *Montes Gelboe*: "This long plaint, so sad and even anguished at times, — a magnificent hymn to the sacred rights of authority and to faithful friendship, — concludes as is always the case, in the most reposeful and serene peace."

## II

### The Choir of Monks, Witness to the Church's Catholicity

Such, then, is the teaching of Dom Gajard, whether in the directing of the schola of the Abbey, or in the numerous "chant lessons," oral and written, which the choirmaster never ceases to bestow upon the visitors of Solesmes and on the listeners who succeed in gathering around him, in spite of his protestations, a continual conspiracy of the guiding lights of the various Gregorian Institutes.

Like all masters, he has his favorite teaching which he repeats and which his disciples never tire of hearing. We know it already: liturgy and Gregorian chant go together hand-in-hand, so well do "the beauty and power of the inspired melodies add power and relief to the liturgical texts. It is clear that those who intentionally make an abstraction of the melody, considering it as a useless luxury and placing



all consideration on the text alone, deprive themselves of a great aid. For often it is the melody which clarifies the real meaning, the scope and the atmosphere of the prayer of the Church."

The Church, the prayer of the Church! This time we are shown the center of the teaching of Dom Gajard, whose alpha and omega are the predication of the "catholic" concept. No one can have spent time at Solesmes without hearing on the lips of the choirmaster reflections like these:

"Let us be understood. Liturgical chant must not be considered as an ornament, a costume for the prayer, a pretty superfluity, a sort of embroidery. I do not think that we must seek the prayer of the Church in the breviary alone or in the missal alone; to be sure, it is there, but incomplete and *lacking its accent*. Only in the antiphony and the gradual does it find *its full, perfect, authentic, adequate expression*. Those prayers were made to be sung, and it is simply commonplace to repeat that, originally, certain of them were reserved for the choir alone. The pontiff did not say them at the altar; it was only through the chant that the people took part practically in the liturgy.

"And thus Gregorian chant is truly a *part of the liturgy*, an integral part. Once more, it is the *authentic and complete prayer* of the Church."

In the mind of Dom Gajard, nothing is more objective than this unity of Gregorian chant with the Church. The entire paleographic work of Solesmes affords the scientific proof of it. What is the result of the successive volumes of the *Paleographie Musicale* if not the establishing of the existence in the golden ages of the Roman liturgy of a uniform interpretation, neume by neume, to the smallest detail, for the entire Gregorian repertoire? Now this uniformity of interpretation, established by the comparative deciphering of the various notations, supposes two things: a common source first of all (which is to be sought at Rome, for the rhythmic tradition is in no way separable from the melodic tradition which everyone is in agreement in attribut-

ing to Rome); and at the same time a universal willingness to conform and to bow to the common interpretation and to not let it be corrupted.

There is something tremendous in this, when one reflects on the will which was necessary for our fathers in the middle ages to maintain intact, and with uniform identity, in spite of the imperfection of the notation and the differences of language idiom of the various peoples of Christian Europe, the rhythmic tradition received from the time of St. Gregory, from the sixth to the eleventh century . . . Is this not a lesson for us?

But since in all this we are simply citing Dom Gajard, let him speak himself:

“This tenacity can be explained. At that time liturgical chant was not considered to be a common property on which each individual had rights. It was a sacred thing, property of the Church. It was the liturgical, *social catholic* prayer, that of the Church. The Church had her own chant, or rather, she had *her own interpretation*; *no individual was qualified to substitute his own for it.*

“But, then, if the Church has her own interpretation, if she has guarded it jealously for such a long time, against all change, can we in conscience substitute our own for it?”

From this central doctrine spring consequences of a very large scope in actuality, the affirmation of which occurs often in the teaching of the choirmaster of Solesmes. Here they are in their strictest relationship:

The first is that there are not two interpretations valid for Gregorian chant . . . one for the monks, the other made for the grasp of the faithful. This is said with the greatest clarity: the interpretation should be rigorously the same in parish churches and in monasteries.

The second is also very clear: the faithful will be sanctified to the very extent that the Office attains its essential

and prime purpose: the glory of God, and they have nothing to lose, quite to the contrary, in maintaining for the great catholic prayer a reserve, sobriety in expression, proportion, a sense of the scale of values.

The third is that the Gregorian restoration should be accompanied by a return to the spirituality of the ancients, of which the Western Patriarch was one of the principal originators . . . “a basic disposition of deep humility, of adoration, of thanksgiving, of praise, of absolute confidence, too, of unalterable peace and love, which forms the basis, the principal beauty and the entire efficaciousness of the sung prayer of the Church.”

The fourth is that Gregorian chant possesses the authentic formula of Christian prayer, to the point that between modern religious music, even that which seems closest to realizing the ideal type, and Gregorian chant, there is not and cannot be a common ground.

The last, then, is that Gregorian chant is essentially the vehicle of community prayer. And by this we go back to the first lines of *Institutions liturgiques*, where Dom Gueranger, precursor as a herald of the Tradition, set forth in principle that the liturgy is not “merely prayer, but clearly a prayer considered in a social form,” and again, that the liturgy is “the social form of the virtue of religion.”

Actually, it would have been inconceivable that the entire effort of faith and science, devotion and research, choral prayer and teaching, in which the sons of the great Dom Gueranger, first Abbot of Solesmes and restorer of the Benedictine Order in France, succeeded one another, would not have reached its goal, its justification and its recompense in a renaissance of the authentic Christian prayer.

### Conclusion

On the supernatural plane where Dom Gajard has wished to lead us, a great calm holds sway. At this point liturgy and sacred music are bound together so intimately



that they form a single element in the general viewpoint of the faithful. Moreover, a recent letter of the Sacred Congregation of Seminaries recommended to the Ordinaries that they send clerics destined for the liturgical apostolate in their dioceses to the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music at Rome.

But let us go further. Is it necessary to give long explanations to those familiar with the story of the long-maintained controversies regarding the restoration of Gregorian chant in order to show how the liturgical renaissance which we observe about us is related to the musical teaching of the school of Solesmes? The monasteries have become undisputedly the conservers of the authentic ceremonial of the sacred functions, the first intention of liturgical prayer restored to the praise and adoration of God, the unanimity in the return to its ancient sources of prayer of the Church, the very pronounced preference among the fervent faithful for common prayer and reading of the liturgical texts, so many currents or practices of contemporary Catholicism which must be included in the line of efforts deployed at Solesmes by several generations of monks with the purpose of reviving in even the humblest parishes the golden age of Gregorian art.

Had they foreseen all this? Probably not, at least to this extent. For them it was enough to take care of their own needs as best they could within the order of their monastic vocation. But it happened that on the higher plane where the wisdom of the Holy Spirit leads the people of God, their work of both artistic and spiritual inspiration was destined to be shaped wonderfully well to the double orientation that the Sovereign Pontiffs impose before our eyes on the entire Church. To the social movement the sons of Dom Gueranger brought the community sense of prayer in the Church and with the Church, the liturgy finding once again its sacred role of expressing perfectly the duty of adoration and the need of supplication of Christian society. To the missionary movement, Solesmes has contributed through a notable enrichment of the catholic spirit in the prayer of every Christian. Is not Gregorian musical

art, rediscovered in the interpretation which was its characteristic in the golden age of the Roman liturgy, also predestined to become the preferred art of these new Christianities which seek passionately to "find their origins" in the Apostolic See? Gregorian chant will become more and more the specific chant of the Roman Church to the extent that the latter affirms itself as supranational, according to the hundred-times-repeated doctrine of the reigning Sovereign Pontiff, His Holiness, Pius XII.

Many things are hidden from us in the hand of our Heavenly Father. Nevertheless, what has already been revealed to us by actual events is the success of the work of *catholicity* achieved by monks who had no other aim than to be faithful as possible to their vocation as Christians devoted to the *Opus Dei* within the hierarchy of the members of the Church, Mystical Body of Christ.

Thanks to the musical teaching of Solesmes, in the innumerable centers of art and devotion extending into the farthest mission country, the Church of the twentieth century has rediscovered the voice of the ancient Church by which to offer God in a sacrifice of praise the melodies which, as the *Instituta Patrum* says: "our fathers learned from the angels themselves, or received from heaven through contemplation under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit who sang in their hearts."

(This concludes the publication of Father Blanc's book, *The Musical Teaching of Solesmes and Christian Prayer* which has been presented in six installments)

## \*THE CHANTS OF THE MASS IN THE EIGHTH AND NINTH CENTURIES

by Dom Jacques Froger, monk of Solesmes

THE GOSPEL AND CREDO. After the *Alleluia* or Tract, the deacon "gets up on the step, makes a cross on his brow, raises his eyes to heaven, and says *Dominus vobiscum*; and all answer *Et cum spiritu tuo*. And he announces the Gospel and reads it" (*Breviarium*).

The singing of the *Credo* is not mentioned in our texts, but there is no reason to be surprised. We know that the Symbol of Nicea did not enter the Roman Mass until the eleventh century. Other countries adopted it long before Rome did: Spain at first, in the West, introduced this custom at the end of the sixth century. The Fathers of the national Council of Toledo, in 589, expressed themselves this way: "The Holy Synod has decreed that in all the Churches of Spain and Gaul<sup>1</sup>, following the example of the oriental Churches, the symbolum of faith of the Council of Constantinople be recited, that is, the symbolum of the 150 Bishops; in such a way as that before the dominical prayer should be said, the creed should be sung (variation: proclaimed) by the people"<sup>2</sup>. In 798, the anti-adoptianist Council of Aix-la-Chapelle imposed it on the whole Franklin Empire, for Sundays and the principal feasts, with the addition of the Filioque.<sup>3</sup>

1. By "Gaul", we must understand here that this means Narbonnaise, the Gallic province which was then attached to the Visigothic kingdom, and over which the Spanish Councils had authority.

2. Mansi, volume IX, col. 993, can. 2. In Isidore of Seville, *De Eccl. Off.*, I, c. 16, we read: "The creed which, at the time of the sacrifice, is proclaimed to the people . . .", which would give us to understand that the *Credo* was not sung by the people, but rather that it was "preached" to them, so to speak, by the group of cantors. The difference between the text of the Council and that of Isidore as read in Hittorp centers about the preposition *to*. Its absence in Hittorp can easily be attributed to an error of transcription.

3. Cf. Dom Capelle, *L'origine antiadoptianiste de notre text du Symbole de la messe*, in: *Recherches de theologie ancienne et medievale*, I (1929), p. 7-20.

\*This is the fourth of a series of articles reproducing Dom Froger's book in its entirety.



A text from the second half of the ninth century proves to us that at Tours the *Credo* was sung by the people. Herardus prescribes "that the *Gloria Patri* and the *Sanctus* and the *Credo* and the *Kyrie eleison* be sung by everyone with reverence"<sup>1</sup>. The Carolingian Empire, which adopted the *Credo* in the mass in imitation of Spain, therefore gave its singing to all the people, just as was done in Spain.

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OFFERTORY. After the Gospel, says the *Capitulare*, "the Pontiff stands, looks toward the people, and says *Dominus vobiscum*. All answer *Et cum spiritu tuo*. He says *Oremus*, and sits down in his place. Then an acolyte pours water on his hands, while two sub-deacons assist him and hold a towel over his knees. During this time, the deacons clothe the altar", that is, they cover it with altar-cloths.

After having washed his hands, the Pontiff rises and goes down from his throne to go to receive the oblations, bread and wine necessary for the sacrifice, which must be in large quantities, since, ordinarily, all those present are to communicate.

Of all our texts, S. Amand is the only one which indicates the beginning of the singing of the Offertory: "The Pontiff goes down to receive the offerings of the people, and makes a sign to the archdeacon of the schola that the Offertory be said". Therefore the singing begins at the moment the collection of offerings begins. It continues while the Pontiff arranges the offerings on the altar. When everything is ready, "the Pontiff bows slightly toward the altar, looks at the schola, and makes a sign that they be quiet." (*Ordo rom. I*)

The *Ordines romani* give no further indications on the singing of the Offertory. We note that it was sung by the group of cantors of the schola and not by a soloist. We must

1. *Capitula Herardi*, no. XVI — Migne, *Patrol. Lat.*, 121,765.

admit that it lasted a considerable length of time, for it continued until the end of the preparation of the offerings. Lastly, we note that like the Introit, the Offertory had to be able to be prolonged at will, since it was necessary to continue singing until the celebrant gave the signal to stop.

These indications on the eventual prolongation of the Offertory correspond exactly with the manner in which the texts are given to us in the antiphonary of the mass. In fact, if we look through the Sextuplex, we see that the Offertory was followed by verses. A methodical check permits us to affirm that, of 195 masses, there are only three in which the Offertory does not include a verse in one or another of the manuscripts. Since the manuscripts do not all give the verses simultaneously, and since each of them mentions them only irregularly, we may attribute the three isolated cases above to chance, and consider that as an absolute rule, verses were provided at the Offertory. Most frequently (140 times), there are two verses; in some cases (15 times) there is only one, and then it is in conjunction with lesser feasts; in 32 cases we find three verses, and if we consider of these 32 those in which the manuscripts are most nearly in agreement, we note that these are on the great feasts of the year: Christmas, St. John the Evangelist, Epiphany, Septuagesima, Sexagesima, Quinquagesima, the First Sunday of Lent, Palm Sunday, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost, St. John the Baptist, St. Peter (vigil and feast). The element of chance is thus eliminated, and we see that the number of verses provided was actually in proportion to the number of the faithful. The greater the number of persons who attended, the more time was required to collect the offerings, and, consequently, the more the Offertory had to be able to be extended. Also, the cantors had, so to speak, some verses in reserve, in proportion to the time that the singing would probably last.

These verses were not performed one after another like those of a Tract. Each was followed by a refrain which usually consisted of the second part or the final words of the Offertory. We have proof of this in two classifications of facts which substantiate one another and leave no room for

doubt. On one hand, we have facts which we may call "literary", which are the indications of reprises, marked in the manuscripts by their *incipit*, or first word; on the other we have facts of a musical nature which are found in the melodic structure of the verses themselves.

In fact, the manuscripts show care in transcribing after the verses the word of the Offertory on which the refrain is to be made. In the Sextuplex, the antiphonary of Compeigne (ninth century) contains such indications. We find them, too, in certain manuscripts with neumes (beginning with the ninth century), among the most ancient and the representatives of the better groupings. Nevertheless, the separate manuscripts give the incipits of the reprises in a somewhat irregular way; also we must observe and complete their indications through the study of the musical structure of the verses.

The Offertory verses have been published by Ott in his *Offertoriale*<sup>1</sup>, so that their melodies, transcribed into the usual square notation, are easily accessible to us. The 107 Offertories which Ott publishes usually include two verses, some of them three, and a very small number a single verse, which, by the way, confirms completely the observations made through the Sextuplex. In sum, more than two hundred verses are found in this edition, and of this number, only sixty end on the tonic of the Offertory. Most of them end on a non-tonic note, which, consequently, *postulates* a continuation. Moreover, among the verses which end on the tonic, a large number end with an inconclusive cadence. We may say, then, in a general sense, that the verse, by its very nature is not conclusive. It requires something which will continue it, and it postulates a reprise.<sup>2</sup>

1: Ott, *Offertoriale, sive Versus Offertorium cantus gregoriani*. Paris-Tournai-Rome, Desclee & Cie., 1935.

2. It will be objected, perhaps, that in Ott we find sixty or so verses after which repetition is not attested to. But this number, which after all represents only a minority, is greatly lessened in importance when we study these apparent exceptions in detail. We must first of all deduct some cases where final verses — I mean those not followed by another verse — close on a note other than the tonic, which calls for a repetition. When the verse ends with a non-tonic note but is then



This reprise, moreover, shows many variations, for the performance of the Offertory, according to the indications of our manuscripts, is flexible, and does not obey a rigidly set plan in a servile manner. Ordinarily the reprise includes only the second part of the Offertory. Sometimes it happens, however, when it is exceptionally short, that the entire Offertory is repeated, for example the Offertory *Bonum est* of Septuagesima.<sup>1</sup> Often, on the other hand, only the last words of the Offertory act as a refrain. Often, too, the two or three reprises are not of equal length and consist of different sections of the Offertory, always, however, of the final part. Sometimes, the phrase which serves as refrain is taken not from the Offertory, but from the first verse. This is the case for the Offertory *Benedictus es* of Quinquagesima,<sup>2</sup> and also for the Offertory *Mihi autem* of the Vigil of St. Peter.<sup>3</sup>

In more than one case, the reprise, which reproduces the words borrowed from the Offertory, does not repeat the melody exactly. The repetition of the text is made on a partially new, or totally new melody.

It happens, too, and this is a still more curious thing, that the refrain, instead of being made in the same tone as the phrase of the Offertory, is performed in a transposition a fifth higher. This is what happens in the Offertory *Ad te levavi*<sup>4</sup> of the First Sunday of Advent. The two verses are written obviously higher than the Offertory, and the two

followed by another verse, we might imagine that this second verse played the role of the continuation called for by the "incomplete" verse, but there are cases where the end of the verse reproduces the passage of the Offertory which immediately precedes the part to be repeated and serves as a sort of introduction to it. The reprise, then, is called for here, too, and although it is not mentioned directly, we must supply it without hesitation. This eliminates several more cases in which reprise is absent. The exceptions are thus reduced to forty or so cases. But by eliminating the pseudo-exceptions we have found proof that the manuscripts many times omit reprises the existence of which cannot be doubted. We have the right, therefore, to attribute their omission to the negligence of the scribes. We can reconstruct without risk of error the Offertory of the XIII-IX centuries by imagining all the verses, without exception, followed by a repetition.

1. *Sextuplex*, no. 34; in Ott, no. 26, no repetition is indicated.

2. *Sextuplex*, no. 36; Ott, no. 15.

3. Ott, no. 74; in the *Sextuplex*, no. 121, the reprise is indicated in the middle of the Offertory.

4. Ott, no. 1.

reprises on *etenim* are attacked not on *re*, but on the high *la*. In this way the piece concludes, in sum, not on the original tonic, but on the fifth, which has become tonic by the fact of transposition. The Offertory *Eripe me*<sup>1</sup> presents an opposite case. It begins like a third mode piece on *mi*, but the final cadence is placed on B natural, thus leaving it suspended on the dominant. After each of the verses the second half of the Offertory is repeated, but then the melody is modified and the final formula lowered a fifth so that this piece does not close on the real final unless it is performed in its entirety, with its verses. The present-day elimination of the verses has left this piece incomplete, thus creating the anomaly of a third mode piece which begins on *mi* and ends on *ti*.

To complete this account of the characteristics which give the Offertory a very special place among the chants of the mass, let us add that the literary text, in the body of the piece as well as in the verses, presents this peculiarity of sometimes *repeating* phrases or members of phrases without apparent reason. Sometimes the first phrase comes back a second time at the end of the Offertory; sometimes the first phrase of either the Offertory or of the verses is repeated immediately and said twice over; sometimes the phrase is cut up, so to speak, in small pieces, each one of which is repeated two or three times, as in the case in the verses of *Vir erat*<sup>2</sup>, where repetition attains its culmination. Here, for example, is the last of these amazing verses: *Quoniam, quoniam, quoniam non revertetur oculus meus ut videat bona, ut videat bona, ut videat bona, ut videat bona, ut videat bona, ut videat bona*. The same words are repeated as many as seven times.

We can see that the Offertory presents a great liberty of form. Variety is the key-word everywhere. Moreover, when we consider that in certain cases the performer found himself free to choose between two repetitions which were offered him, and that, too, the various manuscripts differ among themselves on more than one detail, we are led to suppose, not without reason, that in practice the wishes of the cantors could be given free rein to some extent, and thus augment still more the impression of liberty and variety which the manuscripts already show.

1. Ott, no. 30

2. Ott, no. 71

However surprising the characteristics which give the Offertory such an original aspect may seem to us at first glance, they appear, nevertheless, after consideration, perfectly natural and coherent. Everything is explicable in the light of a single idea which they exhibit in an open and clear fashion. This variety, this freedom of forms, this flexibility, are all characteristics which belong primarily to *lyric poetry*.

In his *Art Poétique*, Boileau observes that in the ode, “a beautiful disorder is an effect of the art”, and this remark, let us note carefully, concerns the ode quite precisely, and not some other poetic form. The reason for it is that the ode is essentially a lyric poem. If “beautiful disorder” characterises lyric poetry, or is at least more in keeping in such poetry, it is because this lyricism expresses enthusiasm, the predominance of affectivity, and that where affectivity rules over cold reason, the parts of discourse can no longer be bound to following the abstract and rigorous rules of reason. Their linking together and their rhythm obey laws which, although perfectly logical in their manner as regards feelings, can take on an incomprehensible aspect in the light of pure reason which would see in their play only “disorder”.

In the singing and the composition of the Offertory, the variety and fantasy are just this “beautiful disorder” which corresponds to the lyrical character of the piece. The Offertory and its apparent oddities become fully intelligible if one is willing to recognize in *lyricism* the central idea which governs the structure of this piece. This will explain why so many Offertories have such a moving character. Some are dramatic (*Precatus est*), others nostalgic (*Super flumina*), others intensely joyful (*Jubilate*), or melancholic and almost romantic (*Vir erat*), etc. We must not be surprised if such lyricism is expressed in very ornate melodies in which the abundance of neumes is not an encumbrance or a superfluity — in the mind of the composer — but, on the contrary a poetic flight.

(to be continued)



## BRIEF NOTES ON THE CHANT OF THE CHRISTMAS MASSES

by Dom Joseph Gajard, O.S.B.,  
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About twenty years ago, in trying to sketch briefly the nature of the liturgical chants of Christmas and to draw out their characteristic elements, I remarked that in contrast with the popular carols, naive compositions, often exquisite, to be sure, prettily reflecting the simplicity of our fathers, but almost uniquely occupied by the "Little Jesus" without there being much of an idea of the God hidden in this Child, or of His infinite grandeur, His omnipotence, His eternal generation and His absolute transcendence, — the Gregorian melodies, undoubtedly among the most beautiful of the whole Gregorian repertoire, are expressive, as the texts themselves, of all the mystery of Christmas in its fullness. It is clearly consideration of a day of birth, to be sure, but the birth of Someone who surpasses our state of existence, the birth of a God. And both ideas are found throughout the music. It is their combination which is the infinite charm of this really unique Office.

Since we are here concerned with a child, everything is joyful, although this is a supernatural, suprasensible joy in both its expression and its object. Everywhere we are bathed in an atmosphere of peace, purity, freshness, light, and tenderness in particular, the whole being blended in an incomparable sweetness. Still, we must note that at the very points where the melody becomes the most caressing, the most naive, the Gregorian tonality, always so solid with its diatonic structure, prevents it from getting carried away and falling into affectedness, the light and frivolous character of some of our carols.

But because this child is God, Third Person of the Holy Trinity Who came to earth *propter nos et propter nostram*

*salutem*, the Church is consistently preoccupied with His eternal birth and the work of redemption which is thereby inaugurated, and she offers for our consideration the entire theological doctrine implied in the mystery of Christmas. From this, in certain pieces, like the graduals, offertories, the responsories of the third nocturn, comes an incomparable majesty, a powerful inspiration, a splendid affirmation of the sovereignty and infinite nature of the Word Incarnate, and sometimes a true enthusiasm. From this, too, in particular, all the pieces acquire this sentiment of adoration, reserve, conservatism, discretion, which gives them all a vague flavor of suspension, somewhat in the manner of a contemplation.

Such is, it would seem, the double character of the Christmas chants: freshness and majesty, tenderness and reserve, everything that is deepest and most delicate in the heart of man, united to all that the omnipotence and infinite grandeur of God inspires. The incontestable superiority of Gregorian chant stems from its success in giving each of these characteristics its true place and its true role.

In order to illustrate these reflections it would be necessary to study the entire repertoire of liturgical chants for Christmas, and in particular, the Office in the strict sense, in which the matter is more obviously brought out. In these few pages we shall consider only the Masses, the three Masses which, through a privilege unique in the liturgical year, fall on the feast of Christmas. These are the masses of midnight, dawn and the day, to which we must add that of the Vigil, which is not less moving and which we could not pass without saying a few words.

## THE MASS OF THE VIGIL

Even the Mass of the Vigil of Christmas is filled and illuminated with the joy of Christmas. Truly a great feast is beginning! After the long wait of Advent, the Church, which for some time seems to have counted the days, no longer contains herself, and from this morning on, contrasting with the other vigils of the year which always maintain a penitential nature, all the chants are marked by joy, all

stamped with this double character of grace and majesty which I have just mentioned.

### Introit *Hodie scietis*

The Introit *Hodie scietis* is fetchingly fresh, simple, joyful, but this is a gentle and recollected joy. There is no real exultation; everything bathes in an atmosphere of tranquil and luminous beauty, which is, so to speak, interior. This is a wholly childlike and modest joy which refrains from any brilliance, even maintaining something meditative and delicate. Except for the beginning, the melody holds consistently to the low notes of the *fa* mode.

Yet there is in this so pure line, apparently so simple, an expressive power. What a magnificent evocation of the event which approaches! Note the almost emphatic elan of this *Hodie scietis*, with the insistence of the tristropha and the upsurge of the pes subbipunctis, which should rest solidly on a fully-rendered first note and broaden out softly on the B natural. Then a few notes further on, but lower, comes the new impulse of *et salvabit nos*, which, after the wholly delightful meditation of the fast-approaching arrival of the Messiah, moves on immediately without noticeable stop on the half-bar and settles itself proudly on the tonic. This is the great news: with the Lord, salvation comes, the long-heralded salvation!

May we, however, emphasize the discretion of these two movements of joyful spontaneity? They in no way contradict the character of recollection and seeming interiority which we have recognized in this wonderful melody. A few notes suffice, very simple ones. Even the *scietis*, which is the only part to rise above the tonic, has a somewhat retentive and perfectly reserved nature, through its melodic design as well as by the stress at its beginning (the long podatus in the manuscripts).

The performance obviously should respect this harmonious ensemble of exquisite nuances which make this Introit a pure masterpiece. Sung in entirety in a very happy, light



and alert movement, it should sound out clearly and warmly, but without precipitation or shock, avoiding, even on the two elans of *scietis* and *salvabit nos* anything which might give it a material nature, such as excessive crescendos or forced voices. This lightness of form ought to be maintained to the end without too great a retard at this end, which remains in the same atmosphere of perfect simplicity.

### Gradual *Hodie scietis*

The Gradual uses the same words, which it applies to the usual type of the Graduals of the second mode (which we shall find again in the Midnight Mass), but with slight modifications to bring out the important words *et salvabit nos*, *et mane videbitis*, modifications, moreover, which seem to belong primarily to the Advent season (Cf. the Graduals of Ember Wednesday and Saturday). In fact, it is found hardly anywhere else.

### Alleluia: *Crastina die*

When the Vigil falls on a Sunday, the eighth mode Alleluia is sung, a very happy one, of great limpidity, too, with its undulations around the tonic *sol* and its pretty elans repeated successively on *do*, *re*, then *do* again. The whole thing should be rendered in a light, very lively movement, with a marked crescendo toward the podatus *si-re*, the center of this beautiful vocalise, and a ritenuto on the last pes subbipunctis which leads to the close, full-sounding and deliberate. The same movement applies to the verse with a vigorous elan on *delebitur*.

This melody, moreover, is merely a later adaptation of an older melody which is sung during Ember Days of Pentecost and on Trinity Sunday, for the *Alleluia: Benedictus es Domine Deus*.

### Offertory *Tollite portas*

The Offertory *Tollite portas* introduces us to an entirely different domain. It is in the second mode, like the Gradual,

but its inspiration is manifestly quite different. Everything here is on a grand scale: the neumes are lavish, the sustained tones are many. Give this entire piece, right from the outset, a broad amplitude, plenty of voice, and plenty of solidity of rhythm, in particular. Amplitude, then, ought not to degenerate into softness, especially in this case. So much warmth and life flow through this wonderful melody!

Do you sense, in particular, the powerful inspiration which uplifts the Holy Church in the second phrase: *et elevamini portae aeternales*? This whole thing ought to be vibrant with enthusiasm, rendered very broadly with full voice and in an unbroken crescendo up to the broad summit of *aeternales*, prepared by the ample melodic curve of the beginning of the word.

Truly the Child awaited is not a Child like others. He is the eternal King, surrounded by all His glory. Obviously we are far, very far, from the popular and charming cast of carols.

### Communion *Revelabitur*

The Communion *Revelabitur* brings us back to the soft atmosphere of the Introit, but with a touch of solemnity. The is the *re* mode, more settled and recollected than the mode of *fa*. Firstly, the melody undulates around the third of the scale, being content to ornament the fifth only twice in a transitory fashion, only to then return in a beautiful falling curve to the tonic.

The movement of this entire Communion, light but not too lively, calls for marked simplicity at the beginning, then becomes somewhat more animated in the second phrase, tends through a progressive crescendo toward the great upsurge of *salutare*, and then broadens out, setting forth in detail, with complacency, everything insistent and affectionate in the development of this *Dei nostri*.

With this kind of invitation and introduction which is formed by the Mass of the Vigil, we come to the feast itself,

which will take place entirely in the same atmosphere of lucidity and adoration.

### MIDNIGHT MASS

In this Mass, although the readings — Gospel and Epistle — are concerned directly with the worldly birth, the appearance of the Incarnate Word, the sung chants are concerned entirely, except for the Offertory, with His eternal generation. We may apply them to the Incarnate Word because of His unity of Person, and nothing could be more fitting; evidently this is the Church's attitude. It is nonetheless true that they invite us to contemplate, in the little Child who has just been born, the Word of the Father, the second Person of the Holy Trinity.

**Introit** *Dominus dixit ad me*  
**and Communion** *In splendoribus*

For most modern interpreters, the Introit *Dominus dixit ad me* ought to be sung broadly, majestically, like the *Resurrexi* of Easter to which they seek to relate it. They would see it as a solemn affirmation of the eternal nature of the Word and His unique sovereignty. "It is," says a commentator who epitomizes the usual concept, "a complete immobility which truly gives the feeling of the infinite grandeur of God; . . . the music of this Introit is as immobile and immaterial as possible, fixing the soul in the overpowering contemplation of the eternally engendered Word".

Maybe, and the melody alone will not contradict this. We must recognize, however, that this is not the interpretation which the whole middle ages gave to this piece, in the years when Gregorian chant was a living thing, a "thing of the Church", when no one would have dreamed of imposing his personal ideas on the catholic melodies. To clearly understand this, it is necessary to study the Introit and Communion of the Midnight Mass together.

In both instances we have, if not the same text, at least the same idea. We are concerned with the eternal generation



of the Word which has just become flesh. The melodies have many points in common: the same alternation from *re* to *fa* and *fa* to *re* from beginning to end, the same abundance of sustained tones, represented in the Vatican edition by repeated punctums. Also, although the modality differs, it is not really distinct until the end of each piece. Everything considered, the general characteristics are melodically similar.

Everything changes as soon as one turns to the indications of the manuscripts. All manuscripts of all the schools are unanimous in this regard, even to the smallest details. They give the really authentic tradition. In the Introit all the neumes are light except for the two of *meus*, the first note of *hodie* and the second syllable of *genui*. There are long notes, of course, but they are strophicus, light by nature. Unquestionably this Introit is essentially light, lively, alert and joyful. In the Communion, on the contrary, from the beginning of the piece to the end, all the neumes are long except one; the light strophicus are replaced by very strongly stressed bivirgas. Beyond doubt, the melody is solemn, serious, and gives an extraordinary sense of affirmation to the words.

These are the facts. It remains to explain them.

It would seem to be simple: although the two pieces both sing of the eternal generation of the Word, the Church puts the Introit into the mouth of the Word Incarnate: *Dominus dixit ad me*, whereas in the Communion it is the Father who speaks. In this fact we have, I believe, the secret of the whole mystery.

We are celebrating the feast of the Nativity. The Lord is here as a little Child. It is He who will speak. Seated on the knee of His Mother, He hears above Him the substantial Word of the Father, and echoing it, He sings of His eternal generation. It is like a realization of all that He is at the moment of His entry into the world, like a kind of thanksgiving to His Father.

Because He is God and He says divine and eternal things, the melody would be, of course, wonderfully serene and peaceful in its grandeur. But because He says these things like a little Child, everything is simple, graceful, fine, delicate, moving, and the melody, far from opposing this lightness of form, lends itself to it wonderfully well. There is nothing "overpowering" here, nothing which recalls the *Resurrexi*, which is, by its modality and all its form, truly "immobile and ecstatic". There is a little insistence, but very little! And this is only on *meus*, in order to affirm His authentic divine filiation: "Thou art my Son, *meus*." Everything else moves along smoothly.

I would like to note, in passing, without going into a detailed melodic analysis, the alternation, or better, the rocking of *Filius meus es tu* (as in the first Antiphon of Matins to the same text), and also that which receives clarity and joy from the major third of the *podatus ad me* (*do-mi*), after the several times repeated minor movement (*re-fa*).

This Introit should be sung very simply, softly, without fire, with recollection. Let the voice, instead of moving heavily, slide lightly with great flexibility over the neumes, stressing *meus* slightly and giving itself over to the marked lullably-like rocking of the melody.

If this interpretation surprises you at first, do not rebel, but try it sincerely. It may well be that you, too, will be captured by the charm of this wonderful piece, very beautiful truly in the modern sense, but much more beautiful in the antique and traditional manner. Of all the Office of Christmas, this piece is perhaps the one which contains the most striking example of this mixture of the two concepts which I have noted above as being the characteristics of the *Melodiae natales*: the feeling of the infinite majesty of God allied to the very pure charm of childhood. Here everything is fresh, candid, naive, I might have said ingenuous.

The Communion, on the contrary, lets us hear, not merely the echo of the Father's words in the mouth of the Incarnate Word, but without intermediary, the very voice of

the Father, which in coming down through the centuries prolongs over the new-born Child the substantial Word which engenders Him eternally. This is like a kind of anointing, a priestly and royal investiture, in a way, a divine one, like a kind of rite. Recall the words of Psalm XLIV, used by Paul in his epistle to the Hebrews and expressly applied by him to the very hour of the Incarnation; the resemblance is significant: "*Et cum iterum introducit primogenitum in orbem terrae, dicit . . . ad Filium: Thronus tuus Deus in saeculum saeculi: virga aequitatis, virga regni tui. Dilexisti justitiam, et odisti iniquitatem: propterea unxit te Deus, Deus tuus, oleo exultationis prae participibus tuis*" (Hebrews I, 6-9; Ps. XLIV, 7-8).

Stress broadly all these *fas*; give this entire piece the solemnity, force and amplitude it calls for. Launch the *ante luciferum* strongly, with energy, making the retards indicated, and do not be afraid to make the rise on *genui te* deliberate, with its drop back to the closing part, also very broad and stressed. You will gain the very clear impression of a sovereign act, of a taking of possession, as well as of an irrevocable affirmation. To the very extent that the Introit is light and graceful, the Communion, in spite of its sixth mode, is serious, profound and eternal.

### Gradual *Tecum Principium*

The Gradual *Tecum principium* is also a masterpiece. It is, however, like *Hodie scietis* of the Vigil, an adaptation of a common type of second mode graduals which is found throughout the year: *Justus ut palma* of Confessors, *Requiem aeternam* of the Mass for the Dead, etc. . . . even the *Haec dies* of Easter. But the composer was not a mere copyist, but an artist of genius, and without being encumbered by his prototype, he did not hesitate, here just as in the *Haec dies* of Easter<sup>1</sup>, to avoid the normal form when he wished to "say" something special which he intended to emphasize. This is precisely the feature which is one of the great beauties of this piece, as well as one which casts a particularly strong

1. See the *Gregorian Review*, 1954, March-April, Vol. I, No. 2, p. 16

light on the freedom of composition and the flexibility of the Gregorian melodies.

Compare it, for example, with the *Requiem aeternam*, which I choose because it is well-known and because, moreover, it gives the classic form of these second mode graduals. Resemblance does not begin until the words *ante luciferum*; the entire beginning is original and individually characteristic. It is impossible not to feel here, too, the inspiration of enthusiasm which, after the meditative undulation of the two first words, raises the Church *in die virtutis*. Attack this double *do* vigorously and sing with all your soul this splendid affirmation of the eternity and omnipotence of the Child which has just been born; after the *tuae* which resumes the usual melodic formula, make a clear upsurge with the melody and give with all your heart and voice the *in splendoribus sanctorum*. Conduct this entire phrase in crescendo, making it as deliberate as possible up to the end of *ex utero*, which should be well-rhythmed, with a broad ternary beat on *do-re-mi* and an impulse on the pressus leading to the cadence (This melodic formula in *splendoribus . . . ex utero* will be used again in the verse for *donec ponam inimicos tuos*, as we have already seen in the graduals of the Vigil and of the Ember Days, and it closes on a very common formula of the fifth mode graduals).

We are manifestly, with the beginning of this Gradual, faced with a veritable leap of enthusiasm, undoubtedly one of the most beautiful in the entire Gregorian repertoire. Isn't this almost a kind of explosion of adoration, praise, and admiration, in particular, and wonder, before this living paradox of the little Child only a few hours old about Whom this extraordinary thing has been said: *Tecum principium in die virtutis tuae in splendoribus sanctorum, ex utero ante luciferum genui te . . . ?* It is curious to note that at the beginning of second vespers the same text will also be ornamented with an unusually expressive melody, very difficult to sing, in fact, so plentiful are the nuances it contains.

As for the rest of the Gradual, everywhere it borrows the usual formulas of the second mode, from *ante luciferum*,



through the entire verse (except for *donec ponam inimicos tuos*); it should be sung lightly in a very alert and joyous movement.

### *Alleluia: Dominus dixit ad me*

The *Alleluia: Dominus dixit ad me* also only reproduces a well-known formula, an extremely ancient one going back to the earliest Gregorian times, the days of the eighth mode *Alleluias* of the type of *Ostende* (First Sunday of Advent). This time, however, it maintains it scrupulously from beginning to end without deviating from it by a single note. I would not say anything about it except for affirming that the general movement ought to be very quick, with well formed nuances, carefully prepared and broad summits, the two cadences of *es tu* and *hodie* quite light, the entire last one being very deliberate and reserved, bringing out clearly the modality of *sol*.

### Offertory *Laetentur*

The Offertory *Laetentur caeli* has a completely different character which breaks with all we have seen up to now in the course of this Mass and which is all the more pronounced in that it is unexpected. Whereas the text would easily lend itself to exterior exultation, to a surge of joy, it moves entirely in an atmosphere of grave serenity and infinite gentleness. It is in the fourth mode, the ecstatic mode, and we shall find something similar in the incomparable Offertory of the Mass of the Day, but then the text and melody go together, since it is concerned with a contemplation of love of divine sovereignty. We are obliged to consider this *Laetentur caeli*, then, not so much as a direct invitation to all creation to celebrate the coming of the Lord, but as a tranquil and wholly interior view of the consecration of the world by the presence of its God within it.

Be this as it may, it would certainly be against the intentions of the composer and an exhibition of bad taste to give this piece a lively and enthusiastic character under the pretext that it contains words like *laetentur* and *exsultet*. We

need merely "believe in the music" in order to understand that the meaning is not this. Just look at it. The melody barely moves at all; why dramatize it? It would be necessary to distort it to make it say something which it does not say of itself. Its solemnity comes from its very context without its being necessary for us to add anything more. The interpreter should sublimate himself to the work and try simply to render it humbly in faithfully following the melodic contours with the little cantando nuances which it implies.

This Offertory should be sung with breadth in a fine legato and with great vocal warmth, but without much movement. It is too bad that the Vatican Edition ends *caeli* on *fa* instead of *mi*, thus impoverishing the whole passage, as the *mi* is the true version and brings out better the modal atmosphere of serenity of this beginning! We would have a suspensive cadence on *mi* at *caeli*, followed by a more conclusive cadence on *re* at *terra*, led to by the same design *re-sol-fa-mi*, which seems, moreover, to be a leit-motiv of this piece. It is found no less than four times: *caeli*, *exultet*, *terra quoniam*. Perform without hurrying and in a broad movement all these subpunctis neumes which are scattered throughout the piece, and do the same with the sustained notes of *exultet* and *faciem*. Follow the contours of *terra* faithfully, too, and those of *venit*. Bring out the double rise and the cadence on *sol* of *Domini* somewhat more, thus setting them in relief, before the contemplation closes in the calm undulation of *venit*, led to by the harmonious low inflection of *quoniam*.

## THE MASS AT DAWN

"The Dawn Mass," says Dom Gueranger, in his *Annee liturgique*, "sings the birth of grace and mercy which is accomplished in the hearts of the Christian faithful."

Like the Office of Lauds for each day, the morning hour in which it is celebrated (after Prime) is what inspires most of the melodies and texts. This is the hour when the sun appears on the horizon to whisk away the shadows and to gradually bathe everything in its light. We are considering.

too, only light and joy, but—and the transposition is easy—the true light, *quae illuminat omnem hominem venientem in hunc mundum*, and which has become flesh for just this purpose: to purify and enlighten us. Also, everything in this wonderful Office is luminous, although it is unfortunately little known by the faithful. Everything is bathed in an atmosphere of exultation and clarity.

In the interests of brevity we shall restrict ourselves here, more than for the other Masses, to summary indications which the reader may develop as he will.

### Introit *Lux fulgebit*

The text of the Introit, taken partly from Isaiah (IX, 2, 6 and 7), sets forth what would seem to be the proposition of the entire Mass. After having announced the arrival of this Light, it defines It and gives Its prerogatives. The melody follows it step by step and brings out the three phrases (for the full bar which follows *super nos* is excessive) in their smallest details.

It begins with a joyful elan, affirmative and enthusiastic, which rises in almost a single bound from low *re* to high *do*, where it hangs an instant with satisfaction on *hodie* (tristropha and podatus subpunctis of the final syllable, all long and stressed in the manuscripts), then coming to rest on two neumes which are also stressed (*super*) on the tonic. But here we are bound to call attention to a gross error of the Vatican Edition which gives a B *flat*, no doubt because of the *fa* which precedes it! In one stroke the major cadence of *sol*, brought out by the very *fa* which precedes it, changes to a minor cadence like that of a *re* mode, and destroys completely the atmosphere of clarity, vigor and joy of the cadence, and by ricochet, the entire phrase. In church on Christmas morning, we are obliged to keep this B flat, the Vatican version, but we should try to minimize its effect by the solidity of the movement and the expressive warmth of the voice.

The second member *quia natus est*, merely reproduces the first, emphasizing its importance and calling for the same comments.

The second phrase, *et vocabitur*, sets forth the titles of the Child just born. Here, someone may say, the melody becomes less solemn, lighter, almost like a simple enumeration, but *not* a dry and expressionless enumeration; we might even say that each of the titles named is set in relief by a special characteristic: the admiring elan of *admirabilis*, the heavy fall of the *fa* of *Deus*, the quick rise of *princeps pacis*, the insistence and singular nature of the cadence on *la* of *Pater futuri saecula*, led to by such an unexpected curve!

In the third phrase we return to the more majestic style of the opening with more enthusiasm and affirmation. There is a leap of a fourth at *cujus*, a heavy and stressed descent on *regni* and the full cadence of the eighth mode.

In summary, we have a light phrase framed between two others of richer style, but the whole moving in a soft and serene light. It would be interesting to compare this *Lux fulgebit* with *Puer natus est* of the Day Mass, both with the same general meaning and in the *sol* mode, but so different in character! But, then, one is the seventh mode, the other the eighth, and the whole difference lies in that.

### Gradual *Benedictus*

This is a long shout of thanksgiving for the work of enlightenment which is now accomplished. The melody is generally lively and light, vibrant with joy. The vocalises flow in flexible arabesques about the text in the manner of a garland. Do not hold it back; do not weigh it down with any unsuitable solemnity. This is fused joy. Only in the second incise on *nobis* does the movement broaden somewhat until the end, as though to underscore that we are the beneficiaries of this divine effort and tenderness!

With the verse, everything swings again to rejoicing. Exultation holds sway and spreads over the whole magnificent vocalise, related to that of the verse of the Gradual of the Epiphany, except that in its first part it is still enthusiastic and vibrant. Do not hurry these *pes subpunctis* which follow in the second incise. Give them, however, breadth in



their elan, and after *factum est*, which condenses in a few notes the expanse of what is usually a full member, go on joyously at *et est mirabile* and make it ring with all possible clarity. How can we fail to see in this procession of stressed and expressive neumes about the tonic and third the wonder of the soul before the splendor of the redemption which is outlined?

As for the final member, common in fifth mode graduals, give it entirely in crescendo toward the *re-mi-si-do-la* of the end. Take care, in particular, that the forward progress of the piece is not held up by the sustained stropieus. Throughout them the whole rhythmic force is moving, gathering in a final elan before the ultimate termination.

### **Alleluia *Dominus regnavit***

The *Alleluia* repeats the words which have served as verse for the Introit, for which it makes a final commentary. It sings of the beauty, power and force of the reign which is inaugurated today. Is there not in its melody an echo of the enthusiastic joy which filled the Gradual?

Sing the vocalise in a vibrant voice, in a very broad tempo. The melody is very ornate and most of the neumes are long in the manuscripts. The verse, then, is obviously animated and arises from the same inspiration, although its tempo ought to be markedly more rapid. Here we have a thousand shadings which need to be brought out.

Let us note at least the rising progression of the members, which is very clear, in spite of the development of the melody. Whereas the *Dominus regnavit* barely more than touches the *la* in passing, *decorem induit* uses it somewhat more, and although the *induit Dominus* also only gives it as an ornament, its general line, with its many alightings on *sol*, rises irresistibly toward the B flat of *fortitudinem* (is this flat really authentic?). These are all things which, among others, should be brought out in the interpretation.

### Offertory *Deus enim*

Again we have Psalm XCII which supplied the text of the *Alleluia* as the source from which the Church takes the words of the Offertory.

This is also a hymn to the omnipotence and the incomparable excellence of this day-old Child, Who has nonetheless reigned since all eternity. Again the eighth mode is selected by the composer to exalt this absolute sovereignty of the Messiah. We could not begrudge this, so perfectly do the idea and its musical expression seem to agree.

Note that this is a powerful, broad, tense melody with little movement. We proceed, so to speak, by large sections. The ambitus is very restrained, hardly rising above *sol* to *do*. The *re* is attained only once, and the *fa* itself, except for a lesser half-cadence, never appears except as a passing note until the end, where it plays a somewhat more important role. There are long held tones on *do* which go on ceaselessly, all ending on the tonic *sol*. Technically, this is also as simple as possible.

Yet, what life there is here, what force of affirmation, what latent admiration and sense of the divine Majesty! Perhaps there is some difficulty in transmitting them in performance because of the very simplicity of the means employed. Only one thing will succeed, the "rhythm." I mean by this the greater rhythm, this drive of life which flows through all the elements of the piece, grasps them, shapes them, organizes them, puts them in order and animates them, in order to blend them finally into a broad and intensely warm synthesis, vibrant with the very life of him who has conceived it.

Sing, then, with all your soul. Neither juxtapose nor break up these long neumes. Neither weigh down nor materialize these endless sustained tones into which the composer has poured so much of his soul. Let the life-giving vigor of the intensive line flow through all these melismas to bind them together . . . an intensive line based on the melodic

curves. Retard each cadence somewhat and then go on immediately with the following elan in crescendo toward the strophicus on *do*, these being attained in softness according to the usual principle, and you will see how everything is illuminated!

Attack the *parata* particularly vigorously (which should be launched from *ti*, not *do*), deliberate on the *sedes* and each following word up to *ex tunc*, which will be rendered with all possible amplitude and expression.

As for the very last phrase: *a saeculo tu es*, it, too, calls for a maximum of solidity and power with its repeated B naturals, almost in direct contact with the *fa*, bringing out so clearly the fullness of the *sol* mode.

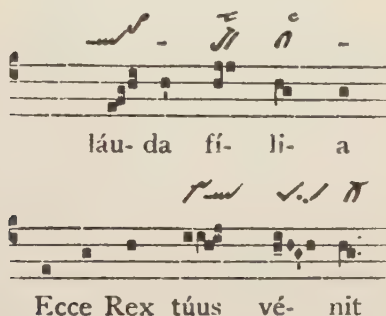
### Communion *Exulta*

It would seem that from the outset of this Mass of Dawn which begins so joyfully, the idea of divine Majesty is gradually affirmed from piece to piece, with the Offertory as the summit. With the Communion we return to the other aspect of the Christmas chants: that of graceful and recollected lightness, of softness and tranquil contemplation. We have joy, too, candid and serene, marked, too, with a certain seriousness.

There are two phrases, each characterized by an elan followed by a drop and very soft undulations toward the final *mi*. It is a double rising and falling curve, very characteristic of the fourth mode, with its frequent returns to *mi*, its bright upsurges to *ti*, and this entire atmosphere of exquisite suavity and clarity which carries across the melodic form.

The first phrase, formed in discretion and reserve, proceeds by steps, as though it hesitated to move on. The intonation is low, rising progressively to *la*, from which we return to *mi* by a pretty drop of a fourth. Then the rise returns more directly, attains *la* again, on which it pauses for a moment, after an ornamentation of the *ti*, only to immediately take *do* and drop back down to the tonic.

In the second phrase, on the contrary, there is a kind of leap of the melody which quickly, in a single spurt, races up to *ti* on which it moves with pleasure in a warm light before returning by a series of wanderings which bring out every word of the text to the final *mi*. Note that the *ecce rex tuus venit* of the second phrase repeats the theme of *lauda filia*, but it modifies it by giving it an energy which it did not have the first time. This cannot be clearly felt unless we restore the true version given by the manuscripts, where the two syllables of *tuus* make only a single neume, a quilismatic type:



The *ti*, which was only an ornament at *Lauda* is now very much stressed, and thus in full clarity and with a shout of admiration the central idea of the whole piece and the whole Office is brought out: the coming of the Messiah, the eternal King and Saviour of the world.

Thus this wonderful Mass closes in a vision of peace, joy and light, a Mass which, unfortunately, is hardly ever sung except in monasteries! It has been said that it is perhaps the most beautiful of the Christmas Masses. Comparisons are very difficult, for in the course of this incomparable feast, we have only masterworks. Let us say merely that this Mass is not inferior to the others.



## THE MASS OF THE DAY

Compared with the Midnight Mass, all the sung pieces of the Day Mass, except for the Offertory, celebrate the coming to earth of the Messiah and the joy which results from it. This is perhaps what explains the more joyful and expansive character . . . I was going to say more exterior character of all these pieces. It would certainly be out of place to pretend that they are less beautiful than those of the other Masses. Let us merely say that they are less profound, less endowed with inner contemplation, except, of course, for the Offertory, and in part, the Introit. They merely have another meaning, and that is all. They convey a very different aspect of the mystery of Christmas which is not less important, the human aspect, if I may put it thus, that of the "Emmanuel", God among us, with all the incalculable consequences which results from it for us in time and in eternity.

Faced with this unprecedented love implied in the very fact of the Incarnation, prelude to the Redemption—*Sic Deus dilexit mundum, ut Filium suum unigenitum daret*, and this *admirabile commercium* which is to be established in the Person and through the work of the Lord, between the divine nature and the poor human nature, the Church trembles for joy and does not know how to manifest its joy, its enthusiasm, its thanksgiving, inviting all creation to see, to "understand", to break forth in chants of praise and gratitude. This does not mean in the least that the divine nature and infinite majesty of the new-born Child are forgotten; it is all too clear. In this regard the Introit is suggestive. I mean only that here the Church is more attentive to the very fact of His birth among us and to the incomparable gift which is made to us.

**Introit *Puer natus est***

The Introit begins with a shout of joy which springs forth spontaneously from the heart of the Church. This is in the seventh mode, the mode of enthusiastic exultation. In a bound, by a direct leap of a fifth, the melody establishes itself immediately on the dominant where it will continue and de-

velop on the thought of the Child Who has just been born, born for us. For the two ideas are distinctly brought out. Whereas the *natus est* is joyful, note how artistically the two *nobis* are handled . . . one high and light, the other more solemn with its drop of a fourth and its return to the tonic! It would seem that this drop to the tonic, led to by a nearly unornamented sustained tone on *do* which follows the ornate recitation on *re* of the beginning, confers on this second number, in spite of the graceful ternary sway which introduces it, a character of plentitude and depth which completes the first idea and closes the arrangement, in its complex unity, of this first phrase, so beautifully balanced.

After *nobis* it seems that in spite of the recollection of certain melodic turns, the atmosphere changes somewhat. From here on only the divine prerogatives of the Messiah will occupy our viewpoint. Before His sovereign power and the divine mission with which He is charged, we have a new elan of enthusiasm which in a single impulse, moving over the expressive scandicus of *imperium*, covers the interval of a seventh, followed immediately by a double ornate recitation on *do*, both closing in the softness of a cadence on *la* minor. There is a long, intense sustained tone which goes on at its pleasure, expressing both joyous and solemn affirmation and loving contemplation. Only the accents are brought out by a melodic turn reaching up to *mi* (*humerum, vocabitur*), except for the single word *nomen* which is sung on a single pitch. Its accent, however, is brought out wonderfully in its non-ictic position between two tristrophæ which sustain it and give it breadth. And when in the last member this unique "name" is to be rendered, the melodic development is again more extensive. Now in place of the light torculus of *vocabitur* we have the stressed podatus of *magni*, followed immediately, after the drop of a fifth which lends substance and depth to it, by a new elan of a fourth, leading to the very developed and expressive final cadence.

### Gradual *Viderunt omnes*

The Gradual, too, is full of fervor and enthusiasm. Begin in a lively movement and rise joyfully in crescendo to

the *mi* of the climacus which ends the intonation, taking care, however, not to attack this climacus harshly, giving it instead a lightness of nature. Do not be afraid to sing *fines terrae* vigorously, with its succession of sustained tones and alternations to the lower third. After the slight crescendo of the end of *terrae* go on joyfully, taking care to link the three words *salutare Dei nostri*, in spite of the quarter bar which here indicates simply a logical musical articulation, as is so frequently the case, and not a stop. The entire second member, which is perhaps the expressive center of the entire piece, should be given in full intensity in a great impulse of ringing enthusiasm, with the intensive nuances as indicated by the melodic line. A crescendo should begin with the accented porrectus of *salutare*, rise progressively throughout *Dei*, attacked deliberately, up to the final scandicus *re-mi-fa*, which is stressed strongly, and come back down lightly in a softer manner on the final of *nostri*.

At the beginning of the second phrase, *Jubilate Deo*, there is a change of aspect. The movement is still joyful, but lighter and in softer voicings, continuing to the end of the first part of the Gradual, obviously with all the little shadings of intensity and length called for by the melody, all of which must be, however, simply shadings.

After the light intonation of the verse do not hurry the long vocalise of *Dominus*. Slow down, in fact, on this series of neumes formed of elans and broad descents, and conduct the entire final incise in a joyful movement and crescendo toward the quillismatic summit *re-mi-fa* before falling back to the lower register to sing *salutare suum* with affirmation. At *ante conspectum* there is a new broader and expressive elan, followed on *justitiam suam* by a long holding back before the two rises of the last incise, which ends in a very harmonious double curve, closing this beautiful Gradual in perfect peace.

Do not be concerned about these perpetual variations of tempo. They occur often in the more beautiful pieces of the Gregorian repertoire. In sum, there is nothing more flexible than the Gregorian cantilena, springing spontaneously from the hearts of saints in the fervor of prayer, and thus participating in the freedom of their inspiration.

*Alleluia: Dies sanctificatus*

The *Alleluia: Dies sanctificatus* is merely an adaptation, pure and simple, although very old, of the usual type of second mode *Alleluias* which we find on all the following days for the feasts of St. Stephen, St. John, St. Silvester, the Epiphany, etc. This means that it would be pointless to seek a special relationship between the words and music. All its very real beauty comes from its very simple context. This is a very light and joyful piece, of warm and clear sonority, and in that sense, perfectly adapted to the feelings which are expressed continually throughout this third Mass of Christmas.

The verse is formed of two large symmetrical phrases, including a member common to both, followed by a second member in each case which is peculiar to each.

The first member, following the very ornate intonation, begins from the tonic and returns to it after a beautiful and very melodious curve which rests successively on the third and fourth. It recites without any ornamentation but the accentuation *podatus* on *re* up to the final accent, which is enriched by a long melisma, a broad flight of firm and yet flexible design, whose arabesques move by progressive steps to settle on the sub-tonic very softly.

Then in the first phrase the second member, after a rhythmic alternation on the tonic with an ornamentation below on *do* and a drop to the low *la*, rises suddenly and reaches the dominant directly, where it makes a simple recitation before falling by a simple cadence to the tonic. On the other hand, in the second phrase, the corresponding second member attacks the dominant boldly, giving the final accent a lively and concluding brilliance, followed by a long and weighty descent which leads back to the tonic.

Note that in considering only the general design of all these melodic formulas, intonations and cadences, we see that they hardly do more than develop in a free sense and in their own way the vocalise of the *Alleluia* itself. It goes without



saying that the interpretation should bring out each of these details of the melodic line.

### Communion *Viderunt omnes*

The Communion *Viderunt omnes* is identical through its second part, *salutare Dei nostri*, with the Communion *Revelabitur* of the Mass of the Vigil, analyzed above. It happens this way quite often in the Gregorian repertoire that the same words call for the same melody, and the marvel is that the composer has succeeded in each case in inserting this in the context with such perfection that we might almost think it to be a new creation. Such is the case here. The *salutare Dei nostri* is the very natural conclusion of the great joyful elan of the first member, which is brought out so clearly on *finis terrae*, which must be given in a rapid tempo, in a single impulse, without marked retard in the descent . . . this should be a kind of preparation for the enthusiastic affirmation of the end.

### Offertory *Tui sunt*

With the Offertory *Tui sunt*, which I have kept intentionally to finish with, we enter another world, or rather, we re-enter that which has been the touching charm of the sung pieces of the Midnight Mass, namely, a marked atmosphere of eternity. Here this is the unique subject of the composition. Text and melody blend beautifully to waft the soul from the memory of all human events, be they the most holy and spiritual. This is a long and loving contemplation of the divine attributes, the factors which are the essentials of this new-born Messiah, new-born yet the absolute Master and undisputed King of all Creation. There is hardly any movement in this melody, except for *Tu fundasti* which rises up in a sentiment of adoration which the composer could not retain.

Here we have a typical example of the fourth mode, the *mi* mode, the mode of ecstatic contemplation. How far we are with this piece and with *Tollite portas* of the Vigil, *Tecum principium* of the Midnight Mass, *Deus enim* of the Dawn Mass, the Responsory *Verbum caro factum est* of

Matins . . . how far, indeed, from the atmosphere of our carols! Yet I believe that this *Tui sunt* surpasses even the beauty of these real masterpieces because of just this quality of interiorness, immobility . . . I was going to say silence!

We shall limit ourselves here to a few practical indications. What good would it do to comment on it? We can only detract from it. We can only examine it and sing . . . trying to avoid misconstruing it as much as we can.

This is an affirmation, but such an adoring one, impregnated with admiration, respect and love! Above all, do not force the tempo or the voice. Maintain a broad tempo throughout, ample, but not dragging, as we must maintain the profound life of this extensive line. Give your voice all the sweetness and warmth possible. Bring out by the tiniest shadings of intensity and movement the smallest undulations of the melody, the only means of obtaining this impression of life of which I have written. Take all the fine neumes which follow in a leisurely movement, giving each of the notes its full time-value and blending the whole thing in an uninterrupted legato. Try to express all the infinite respect implied in these beautiful melodic turns of such wonderful softness: *caeli, tua est terra*, etc.! What an expansion of love and gentle power in this rise of four climacus! We must, I think, blend completely without any noticeable interruption, even at the little bars, the words *et plentitudinem ejus tu fundasti*, taking this wonderful sentence, so flexible and light from the outset, in a progressive crescendo which will find its height on the *tu*, sung broadly and with a little emphasis, but no harshness, without detriment to the return to softness of *fundasti*.

And then, after a silence, comes in conclusion the wonderful delectation of the "justice" of God, which is like the great and mysterious atmosphere in which He moves and is the mark of his works: *justitia et judicium*, this phrase of such extraordinary rhythmic sway, of soft and luminous warmth which is quite impossible to describe, which ends, like *plentitudinem ejus* of the preceding phrase, but with greater clarity, on a cadence on *re*. There is a momentary lapse into

the *re* mode, which, taken up again elsewhere on *praeparatio*, adds still more to the beautiful and firm serenity of the whole piece, before returning finally to conclude on the *mi* mode, leaving us this indefinable atmosphere of beauty and silent adoration in which we have been wrapped in from the beginning. Gregorian art attains here, I believe, its height of expression, depth and plentitude. These wonders are not only works of art, they are also, and perhaps even more, principles of power and action. It cannot be but profitable for all those who believe, to all those in particular who have been engaged in a long trial, to sing them and re-sing them endlessly, humbly, on their knees, in a great act of filial abandon and love.

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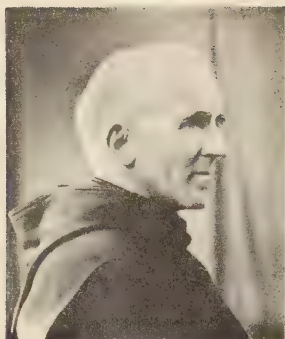
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